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Music Legend Clive Davis Dazzles Audience at Cardozo

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BRINGING LAW TO LIFE

CARDOZO LAW

BENJAMIN N. CARDZO SCHOOL OF LAW • YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

MUSIC LEGEND CLIVE DAVIS DAZZLES AUDIENCE AT CARDZO



January 24, 2017

Clive Davis, the legendary music executive and producer who shaped the careers of stars from Janis Joplin to Whitney Houston, provided Cardozo students and others with a detailed account of how his legal training, business acumen and ear for music brought him to the pinnacle of the music industry. On Thursday night, Jan. 19 he discussed his journey through—and to the top of—the music industry, in an interview with Cardozo alumna Julie Swidler '82, in front of a capacity crowd in the Jacob Burns Moot Courtroom.

Since graduating from Cardozo in 1982 Julie Swidler has crafted an incredible career of her own in the music industry, rising to become the executive vice president for business affairs and general counsel for SONY Music Entertainment. She has had a long professional relationship with Davis and she has been listed on Billboard's Top 100 and Top 40 lists of Women Executives in Music since 2011.

"Creative industries need creative lawyers," said Cardozo's Dean Melanie Leslie, in her introductory remarks. "There's no better way for

RELATED NEWS

August 26, 2019

[Cardozo Named One of Billboard's Top Music Law Schools for 2019 \(/news/cardozo-named-one-of-billboards-top-music-law-schools-2019\)](#)

Billboard named Cardozo School of Law one of the top law schools in the country for training lawyers in the music industry. Cardozo is ranked among law schools around the nation, including Harvard and University of California, Berkley.

August 16, 2019

[Cardozo Welcomes the J.D. Class of 2022 \(/news/cardozo-welcomes-jd-class-2022\)](#)

Integrity, generosity, grit and joy were the guiding themes of Dean Melanie Leslie's welcome to the Class of 2022 for their first day of orientation.

July 8, 2019

[Class of 2019 Gives Back to Cardozo \(/news/class-2019-gives-back-cardozo\)](#)

Cardozo's 3L Class Gift is an annual tradition at the Law School. Led

our students to understand that connection than from Clive Davis— a legend in the music industry. This kind of link is so important for our students and it is the reason we created the FAME Center for fashion, arts, media and entertainment law. We have a top-rated intellectual property program.”

Billboard Magazine recently listed Cardozo in their top ten law schools for lawyers in the music industry.

Swidler asked Davis, a Harvard Law School graduate who began his career as a lawyer and is currently Chief Creative Officer at SONY, how he got started at Columbia Records. Davis had been working at a private law firm. A former colleague offered him a position at Columbia and Davis became the company’s general counsel in 1960, after working there only six months. Davis continued at Columbia Records and said he “immersed himself into the business of music.” He was about to turn down an offer to serve as the president of the company’s musical instruments division, which would require Davis to move to the West Coast, when a fellow colleague took the position instead, and Davis fortuitously ended up staying in New York as the president of Columbia Records. He said he was out of place at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967-no other music company presidents were there-but due to the last minute visit to California, Davis said, “my life changed with those unexpected influences. I knew I was in the midst of a musical revolution.”

Shortly after the festival, Davis bought Janis Joplin’s contract and her first album sold 5 million copies. Columbia, which had previously avoided rock music, expanded its portfolio through Davis’ rock artist discoveries.

Davis is responsible for helping propel the careers of multitudes of artists including Whitney Houston, Alicia Keyes, Santana, Rod Stewart, Barry Manilow, Melissa Manchester, Aerosmith, and Aretha Franklin, among others. His “natural gift of ears” took him down a path working directly with artists, expanding more R&B and urban music. But at the height of his success at Columbia, he found himself forced out of the company in the early 1970s after an employee’s fraudulent billing scheme put Davis at the forefront of scrutiny. Swidler asked him how he handled this experience to which he responded, “You’ve got to be resilient.”

Resilient he was, taking his exit and leading himself to a new venture

by a student committee, these individuals dedicate their efforts to enhancing engagement and fundraising efforts among classmates, friends and family in our community.

May 29, 2019

[Cardozo Hosts 41st Commencement \(/news/cardozo-hosts-41st-commencement\)](#)

A star-studded line-up kicked off Cardozo’s 41th Commencement Exercises. Graduates received J.D. and LL.M. degrees at Lincoln Center’s David Geffen Hall on May 28.

April 12, 2019

[Randall Rothschild '97 Talks Real Estate, Law and Business \(/news/randall-rothschild-97-talks-real-estate-law-and-business\)](#)

Dean Melanie Leslie interviewed Randall Rothschild '97 on April 9 as part of the *Pathways* speaker series. Rothschild discussed how Cardozo prepared him for a career in the real estate industry.

as the founder of Arista Records. Davis' journey towards exposing more pop singers and matching up singers who didn't write for themselves with songwriters, proved incredibly successful for Arista and led to the signing of such artists as Dionne Warwick and in 1983, Whitney Houston, who went on to unprecedented success as a pop singer.

Davis' reunion with Carlos Santana in 1999 led to what Davis called "the proudest" album he ever worked on, Santana's Supernatural, which won eight Grammy awards, a tremendous comeback for Santana who originally signed with Davis 30 years earlier. Davis himself was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2000.

Swidler's final question of the night focused on Davis' family, jokingly asking him how his four children all ended up as lawyers. Two of his children are Cardozo alumni. The discipline of being a lawyer, Davis said "is a great background. The legal training that I got put me in very good stead."

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